

Stacey Parker

From: Stacey Parker
Sent: Friday, October 17, 2014 5:09 PM
Subject: PRESS RELEASE 10/17/14 - I Count Week October 19-24, 2014

PRESS RELEASE



City of Norman
201 West Gray
Norman, Oklahoma 73069

For Immediate Release: October 17, 2014

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I COUNT WEEK OCTOBER 19-24, 2014

The campaign to end Veteran and Chronic Homelessness in our community by December 2016 will become a reality through the active participation from the I Count Registry Week, One Vision One Voice, and the Cleveland County Continuum of Care.

Over the past two years lead agencies Food and Shelter, Salvation Army, and Thunderbird Clubhouse have successfully housed over 34 individuals that can be classified as chronic homeless. With the implementation of the Housing First Philosophy by these agencies and the success that has been documented by others across the country, many other homeless service providers in our community are embracing this change. Housing First is permanent housing that happens first and fast, and includes appropriate professional case management, so that no one must battle disease, disability, mental illness or substance abuse without the safety and stability of a home.

Over 80 volunteers will undergo training on Sunday, October 19 for participation in the first I Count Week to be conducted in Cleveland County. The purpose of I Count is to identify and connect to vulnerable and chronic homeless individuals on a personal level. Teams of volunteers will hit the streets at 4 am on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, October 20-22, to interview any persons that are sleeping outside. The teams will administer an assessment tool to each individual that will evaluate their overall vulnerability. For the past several months, potential locations have been identified in Cleveland County by law enforcement personnel, service providers and the general public. The identified locations as well as a general canvassing will take place each of the three mornings.

The effort of I Count Week is based upon the successful 100,000 Homes Campaign. The emphasis is that each person on the street is known by name because someone has deliberately gone out to the streets to find them, assess their needs and meet them where they are at.

At 2:30 pm on Friday, October 24 the I Count Community Report will be presented at Sarkeys Foundation. We will share our stories of our 4 am forays, give you numbers, needs, and plans to house those who desperately need a home. This event is open to the public and attendance is encouraged as One Vision One Voice reports the results of the I Count Week effort. The time has now come to stop managing homelessness and start ending it in our community.

For more information, visit the One Vision One Voice website www.ovovnorman.org or email Lisa Krieg, lisa.krieg@normanok.gov.

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